

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FEDERAL WILDLIFE PERMIT OFFICE ESTABLISHED: RICK PARSONS NAMED CHIEF

A new office has been established to implement an international treaty regulating commercial trade in and movement of the world's endangered wild plants and animals, Director Lynn A. Greenwalt of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today.

The Federal Wildlife Permit Office will also ease the plight of scientists, zoos, and others who engage in activities involving federally protected wildlife by reducing red tape and simplifying the permit issuing process while maintaining needed controls. Frequently, legitimate activities involving wildlife may require clearance or permits from several government offices including the Departments of Health, Education and Welfare, Treasury, Commerce, Agriculture, and Interior. The Federal Wildlife Permit Office will first work toward coordinating permits issued within the Fish and Wildlife Service, and later may become the coordinating body or clearing house for the issuance of all Federal permits involving wildlife.

"The United States wants to do more than merely comply with this treaty," Greenwalt said. "We want to be an international leader in making it truly effective in ensuring that plants or animals don't become extinct from commercial exploitation. The new office will help bring this about and will also carry out the mandate of the President to simplify the wildlife permit process within the entire Federal establishment."

A major responsibility of the office will be to ensure that the United States complies with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The treaty was signed by more than 50 nations in 1973 and has so far been ratified by 26. In April, President Ford signed Executive Order No. 11911 designating the Secretary of the Interior as the management authority for this country. Interior Secretary Thomas S. Kleppe has delegated this responsibility to the Federal Wildlife Permit Office.

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The Convention established appendices of plant and animal species along with a system of regulations to prevent international commerce in plants and animals from contributing to the decline in any species. The regulations are more or less restrictive, depending upon the degree to which a species is threatened with extinction and the contribution trade makes to such a threat.

Rick Parsons, 33, has been selected to head the office as Chief. "He has the management skill, legal background, and personal sensitivity to the interests of wildlife users that is needed for this office to facilitate rather than impede the issuance of permits," Greenwalt said. "At the same time his knowledge of wildlife protection laws will help him ensure that permits are granted only for legitimate activities."

Parsons is an attorney, and most recently was Special-Agent-in-Charge of Regulations and Rulings in the Service's Division of Law Enforcement where he supervised the civil penalty case process and the drafting of new wildlife regulations. Prior to that he was an attorney advisor with the Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service in its Office of General Council and worked on international legal matters and law of the sea.

He graduated from the University of Connecticut's Law School with a J.D. in 1967, and received an LLM from the New York University School of International Law in 1968. He and his wife Nancy have two sons and reside in Bethesda, Maryland.

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